

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-11 IO-14 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 FEA-02 INT-08 AID-20 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SIL-01

LAB-06 FRB-02 DRC-01 /192 W
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R 111456Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5244

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MT

SUBJ: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

REF: VALLETTA 2422, DEC 7, 1973

1. SUMMARY. CONTINUING THE CURRENT SURGE IN POLITICAL
ACTIVITY OPPOSITION SHADOW FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER
ALBERT BORG OLIVIER DE PUGET HELD FEB 9 PRESS CONFERENCE ON
NATIONALIST FOREIGN POLICY. IN EFFORT COUNTER NATIONALIST
EFFORT, PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER LORRY SANT AND
HIS PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY PATRICK HOLLAND SPOKE ON
DOMESTIC POLICY OVER WEEKEND.

2. B.O.DE PUGET SAID THAT NATIONALIST FOREIGN POLICY
WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD A STRENGTHENING OF MALTA'S
FRIENDSHIP TOWARD BRITIAN. HE DEPLORED THE GOM BASE
AGREEMENT WITH HMG BECAUSE IT IS A "RENTAL" AGREEMENT,
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DOING AWAY WITH THE CONCEPT OF EQUALITY AND MAKES MALTA

SUBMISSIVE TO HMG AND OTHER NATO COUNTRIES. THE NP WOULD REESTABLISH THE PREVIOUS BALANCE WITH BRITISH AND EQUALITY WITH EUROPE. NP WAS NEITHER AGAINST NOR FOR THE WEST AS MALTA IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WEST.

3. NP WANT MALTA TO BECOME A LINK BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BECAUSE IT IS IN EUROPEAN INTEREST TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS OF MED. COUNTRIES. MALTA HAS A DUTY TO ENSURE THAT THE MED. COUNTRIES EMERGE FROM THE SUPER POWERS' TUTELAGE AND SEEK EUROPEAN BACKING. THIS IS WHY MALTA'S PLACE IN EUROPE IS TO BE AN INTERPRETER OF THE EXIGENCIES OF NON-EUROPEAN MED. COUNTRIES.

4. WITH REFERENCE TO HIS RECENT VISIT TO EGYPT AS PART OF A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION, HE SAID THAT DR. FAWZI HAD TOLD HIM THAT EGYPT WOULD FOLLOW UN RES. 242 AND THAT HIS COUNTRY WANTS A SINCERE AND JUST SOLUTION FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. B.O. DE PUGET SAID THAT NP ALWAYS REMAINED NEUTRAL IN THE PRO-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND WAS NEVER CRITICIZED FOR IT.

5. PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER SANT SPOKE ON THE ENERGY CRISIS, SAYING THAT MALTA WAS FORTUNATE IN BEING THE ONLY CONSUMER COUNTRY THAT HAD GUARANTEED PETROLEUM SUPPLIES BECAUSE OF ITS FRIENDSHIP FOR LIBYA AND ITS SUPPORT FOR THE ARABS. HE WARNED HOWEVER, THAT COST OF MALTA'S OIL IMPORTS THIS YEAR COULD RISE 5 TO 15 OR 20 MILLION POUNDS AND THAT "CERTAIN ECONOMIC MEASURES" WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN. THESE MEASURES HAD NOT HIT THE WORKERS BECAUSE GOM IS SUBSIDIZING KEROSENE HEAVILY. HE CALLED FOR AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY TO HELP ALLEVIATE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES, AND FOR ALL MALTESE TO BACK GOM" AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT."

6. PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY HOLLND SAID THAT EVERY NATION IS SUFFERING FROM THE OIL CRISIS, AND THAT MALTA IS NO EXCEPTION. HE WARNED THAT ELECTRICITY RATES COULD BE DOUBLED OR EVEN TREBLED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HOLLAND SAID THAT GOM WOULD NOT ALLOW MANAGEMENT TO DISCHARGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKERS INDISCRIMINATELY BECAUSE OF THE ENERGY CRISIS, AND THE AUTOMOBILE TRADERS ASSOCIATION HAD BEEN SO INFORMED. HE ALSO PRAISED GOM'S PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM AND ANNOUNCED FUTURE PLANS FOR NEW PROJECTS.

COMMENT: AS IS CUSTOMARY, BOTH LABOR SPEAKERS DENOUNCED NATIONALIST ACTIONS WHILE IN POWER AND ASSERTED THAT THINGS WOULD BE MUCH WORSE IF THEY WERE IN POWER NOW.GETZ

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